

News from the

**U.S. Senate Committee on
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions**

Michael B. Enzi (Wyoming), Chairman



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***ENZI'S LANDMARK HEALTH CARE BILL PASSES CLOTURE VOTE;
SENATE BEGINS DEBATE ON S. 1955***

Washington, D.C. – The Senate voted today in favor of a motion to debate a landmark bill that will allow business and trade associations to band together across the nation and offer affordable group health insurance to working families, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY) Chairman of the HELP Committee said.

“Today’s vote is a major step toward providing more affordable health insurance options for small business and working families,” Enzi said “The people who make up the bedrock of our economy – small, family owned businesses, have issued a mandate for change. It’s time for the Senate to pass this bill. No more excuses.”

The bipartisan bill, “The Health Insurance Marketplace Modernization and Affordability Act,” S.1955, which was introduced by Enzi and cosponsored by Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE) and Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT), will allow business and trade associations to band their members together and offer group health coverage on a national or regional basis in direct response to runaway costs that are driving far too many employers and families from comprehensive health insurance.

Small Business Health Plans (SBHP) are highly popular among the general public, enjoying broad, bipartisan support. A recent independent survey revealed that 93

percent of Republicans and 86 percent of Democrats support legislation to create SBHPs. However, as the debate on the bill begins, some critics with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo at the expense of the American worker have resorted to scare tactics to drum up support in opposition to S. 1955.

“I am confident that when Americans begin to hear the Senate debate on S. 1955, they will support it overwhelmingly,” Enzi added. “I am pleased at the action the Senate took today and I look forward to a full and open debate that will reveal the enormous advantages of the bill.”

“With the help of a diverse group of Senators and business groups representing small business, we’ve bridged the gap between small business proponents of traditional AHPs and state-based interests worried about the prospects of dramatic regulatory changes in health insurance markets.”

Enzi praised the support of Senator Nelson and Senator Burns, the bill’s cosponsors, saying: “I’m pleased to be joined by my colleagues, Senator Nelson and Senator Burns. They bring invaluable experience to this effort and I am grateful for their commitment to this issue.”

A report prepared by the independent firm of Mercer Oliver Wyman, Inc. found that the Enzi-Nelson-Burns bill would reduce health insurance costs for small business by 12 percent. In today’s dollars - about \$1,000 per employee; and, would reduce the number of uninsured in working families by 8 percent - or approximately 1 million people.

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